

frequently had about my own poems, namely that they do not always have to express some clear, rationally articulable meaning in order to be potentially valuable. His arguments have bolstered my sense that I need not be afraid to create work whose images and narratives feel right to me even though I can't say exactly what they add up to thematically. Gilbert gives me reason to hope that at least some of my poems may constitute "forms of *eros*" that move the reader, to some degree defamiliarize his or her reality, in "ineffable and numinous" ways.

Tsugigami Gathering the Pieces, by Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff and Connie R. Meester (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2018). 80 pages; 5¼" × 7¾". Glossy four-color-card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-30-2. Price \$25.00 from www.redmoonpress.com.

Reviewed by John Thompson

Valorie Broadhurst Woerdehoff and Connie R. Meester have collaborated on renga and other forms of linked verse for twenty-four years, as well as tsugigami collages that evoke and visually underscore the themes and experiences explored in their poetry. In *Tsugigami Gathering the Pieces* these two accomplished poets beautifully interweave their voices with haiku and senryu calls and responses of great subtlety and power.

The first three verses of "Pink Moon" present different ways of letting go:

abandoning a past
to the thrift store
spring cleaning

old journals
kindle a cozy fire

deciding what to bring
on this journey
pink moon

Connie and Valorie gather their truths together, some pleasant, some painful, but each one more resonant because of its context, its relationships with the other verses in the rengay. In a linked verse context, when you present a haiku moment, you are inviting your co-writers to be sparked into their own haiku moment that is expected to be both linked to and shifting away from your own.

In “Time and Again,” a shared meditation on aging, Valorie and Connie delve into many deeply-felt but rarely so well-expressed aspects of their theme:

his smile
turning back the clock

earth's rotation
feeling the gravity
in my bones

spring day
my aging reflection
surprises me

A quiet wisdom shines through so many of these poems—moments of insight as well as powerful images, unfettered emotions, and deeply felt realizations of change.

Another pair of poems that impressed me are from “Between Stars,” which describes many levels of intimacy:

creeping along at dusk
fog covers our trail
and the startled deer

breathing in the closeness
between stars

“In This Together” presents the chaotic world of storms and bad news around the world before ending with a personal cry for help and the eloquence of expressed love:

homeless man
asks me for food

rain slick road
we speak our love
out loud

The last verse is especially effective because it also reconnects us to the opening verse:

in this together —
a storm
batters the trees

Connie and Valorie’s book also contains many excellent linked verse poems that are longer than renga and employ one-line verses. I find the end of “Gardens” particularly delightful.

autumn gunny sacks overflow with walnuts

webs connect beds in the garden and house

I wholeheartedly recommend this book, not only as a great read but, also, as an inspiration to write linked verse with someone else.